



NATHAN LIANG — THE TECH

Bicyclists ride in solidarity with Black Lives Matter on Massachusetts Avenue during Ride for Black Lives IV Sept. 26.

Dining commits to address food quality student complaints

Students dissatisfied with status quo, but optimistic about changes

By Emily Jiang

After one month on campus, student opinions on dining have been mixed to negative. Students cited poor food quality and lack of variety, particularly at the beginning of the semester. In response to negative student feedback, MIT Dining has committed to improving food quality and increasing options for students with dietary restrictions.

MIT Dormitory Council (DormCon) Dining Chairs Shaïda Nishat '22 and Duha Syar '23 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that “there have been concerns with a lack of variety and an overall decline in quality.” However, “MIT is providing for a lot of people under a greater number of health and safety restrictions due to the pandemic.”

Starting Sept. 29, MIT Dining began cooking in dorm kitchens for dinner instead of at a centralized location in an effort to improve freshness and quality. Previously, all food was prepared in Maseeh, Baker, and McCormick. Dining also recognizes that “meals have been repetitive,” and is “working on increasing variety across the week,” Nishat and Syar wrote.

They wrote that currently, over half of the options for any meal are vegetarian, “with a good portion being vegan, on any given day.” In addition, MIT Dining offers meals prepared in its “Oasis” kitchen without the eight major allergens. However, some students have reported “shortcomings” in accommodations for other dietary restrictions, Nishat

MIT Dining, Page 2

IN SHORT

Undergraduate registration for second quarter PE classes opens Thursday at 8 a.m.

Add date for full-term subjects is Friday.

Friday is also the deadline for completing cross-registration and the last day for May and September 2021 degree candidates to apply for a double major.

Flu vaccines are available at the Johnson Athletic Center from 8 a.m.–4 p.m for Covid Pass participants until Friday. In order to register for Spring classes, all MIT students must submit proof of receiving a flu shot by Oct. 30.

Graduate registration for second quarter PE classes opens next Tuesday at 8 a.m.

Nominations for recent MIT graduates to the MIT Corporation are open until Oct. 30.

Interested in joining *The Tech*? Email join@tech.mit.edu.

Send news and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.

Two positive tests for COVID-19 reported at McGovern Institute

Medical to add results as ‘true positives’ to counter despite ‘environmental positives’ from research in affected lab

By Daisy Wang

MIT Medical reported two positive COVID-19 tests from a McGovern Institute for Brain Research lab in Building 46 Sept. 18–19.

It is “likely” that the lab’s research on COVID-19 led to “environmental

positives,” Vice President for Research Maria Zuber, McGovern Institute Director Robert Desimone, Picower Institute Director Li-Huei Tsai, and Brain and Cognitive Sciences (BCS) Department Head James DiCarlo wrote in an email to the BCS community Sept. 23. Researchers in

the lab conduct “work on diagnostic assays to detect the same part of the [SARS-CoV-2] viral genome” that MIT Medical’s tests detect.

MIT Medical’s COVID-19 test does not differentiate between non-

McGovern, Page 2

UA Diversity Council established to encourage MIT-wide diversity, equity and inclusion efforts

The council and ICEO will help finalize the MIT Strategic Action Plan by February 2021

By Sarah Zhao and Kerri Lu

The Undergraduate Association (UA) established the UA Diversity Council in July to promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts. The Council plans to advise the development of the MIT Strategic Action Plan for DEI throughout fall and IAP.

The Council’s charter writes that the Council “will work closely with the Institute Community & Equity Office to elevate the DEI needs of undergraduate students through policy, statements, and recommendations.” The Council’s goals include developing and implementing DEI policy in departments, labs, and centers; facilitating the exchange of DEI strategies

between student groups; and increasing “transparency between MIT administration and the rest of the community regarding progress on DEI initiatives.”

The charter writes that in the UA’s 127-year history, it has “sparingly held student representation from historically underrepresented and under-resourced groups.” This has led to “limited” Institute-wide DEI progress, “hindered the ability for student organizations to share DEI strategies and tactics with each other,” and “limited the ability for the undergraduate student body to hold MIT accountable to its DEI goals.”

UA President Danielle Geathers '22 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the Council’s purpose is

to promote advocacy and collaborate with “underrepresented student groups on campus.” Geathers added that “although the UA has had the Community and Diversity committee for several years,” it “lacked a formal connection to student groups and typically focused on campus-wide efforts rather than advocacy.”

In the same email, UA Assistant Officer on Diversity Kelvin Green II '22 wrote that the Council hopes to “increase the participation of student groups in student government that do not traditionally interface with the UA” and “institutionalize their existence within the UA by regularly soliciting their feedback on a wide range of Institute topics.”

Green added that the Council’s vision of diversity encompasses not just “cultural affinity” but “all identity-based affiliations whether that be a dance group, a course number, or another representative body like Class Council.” The Diversity Council welcomes all groups that believe in engaging with “diverse perspectives and/or experiences.”

President L. Rafael Reif announced in an email to the MIT community July 1 that MIT administrators planned to “engage the community in developing and implementing a comprehensive, Institute-wide action plan for diversity, equity and inclusion.” Institute Community and Equity Officer

Diversity Council, Page 2

Remembering Sergio Dominguez (1997-2020)

Sergio Dominguez '22 died suddenly Sept. 22, President L. Rafael Reif wrote in an email to the MIT community Sept. 23.

Dominguez majored in Course 6-9 (Computation and Cognition) and lived in New House and East Campus. His hometown was El Paso, Texas.

Dominguez was a Gates Millennium Scholar. “Sergio loved to learn. He read widely about philosophy, spirituality and religion, delighted in exploring Wikipedia and relished learning Japanese,” Reif wrote.

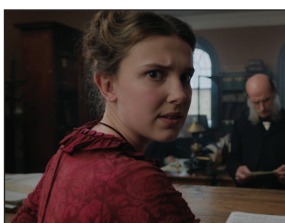
— Kerri Lu

ON THE ROCKS

A movie that lives up to its name. **ARTS, p. 5**

SUSTAINABLE CHOICES

MIT Dining pilots reusable utensils. **OPINION, p. 4**



SHERLOCK'S SISTER

Enola Holmes shines in this story. **ARTS, p. 5**

GOFUNDME

How MIT defends against an online imposter. **CAMPUS LIFE, p. 8**

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WEATHER

Pumpkin spice is back.

By Conrad Goffinet

Summer held on to its warm grip of the month of September until the very end, with highs a few degrees above than normal persisting until the end of the month. That’s about to change, as fall air moves in, however. Temperatures in the upcoming week will stabilize with highs in the mid 60s and lows in the low 50s, which is the kind of weather that we expect for early October. The rest of this

month should see temperatures steadily decreasing; historically, highs usually fall to the mid 50s by the time that Halloween hits. That nip in the air is right around the corner and with it all of the trap-pings of fall.

Foliage this year is projected to peak in the Boston area during the week of the 12th of October, making the upcoming long weekend a perfect time to plan a socially-distanced trip to see the beautiful New England autumn.

Extended Forecast

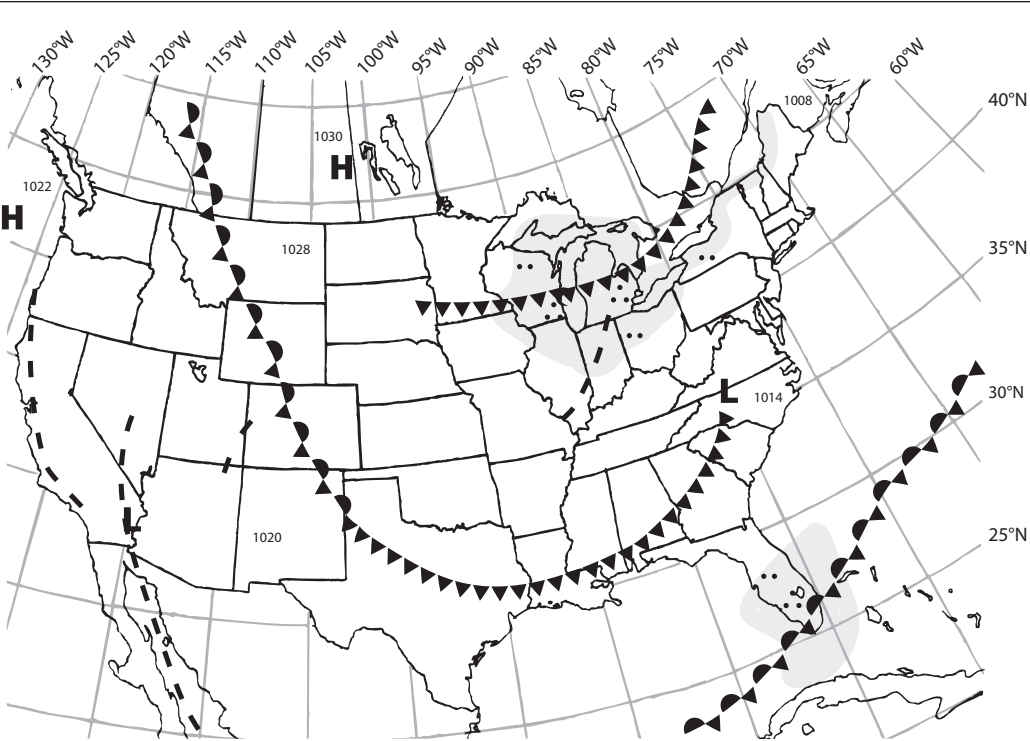
Today: Mostly sunny, high near 75°F (24°C). Winds out of the southwest from 11-14 mph.

Tonight: Clear with a low of 56°F (13°C). Light southwestern winds ranging from 5-9 mph.

Tomorrow: 30% chance of precipitation with accumulation of less than a tenth of an inch. High of 66°F (19°C). Partly cloudy at night with a low around 50°F (10°C).

Saturday: Sunny with a high of 65°F (18°C). Low of 48°F (9°C) at night.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, high near 64°F (18°C). Cloudy at night with a low of 51°F (11°C).



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, October 1, 2020

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
H High Pressure	Trough	Snow	Fog
L Low Pressure	Warm Front	Rain	Thunderstorm
Hurricane	Cold Front	Light	Haze
	Stationary Front	Moderate	
		Heavy	

Ghenand: ‘vegetarian pasta’ was once put in same container as chicken dish

MIT Dining, from Page 1

and Syar wrote, adding that they have been “advocating for changes” to better accommodate other diets.

They wrote that food delivery had been on time. They added that while the GET meal-ordering app does not always reflect the meals served, MIT Dining will resolve this issue “soon.”

Belinda Shi ’21 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that her dining experience has been “generally unfavorable,” adding that “the range of foods hasn’t been great, and sometimes the quality can be really bad.” She wrote that while she does not have dietary restrictions, she wishes that she “had more options, or at least a fallback option” if she does not “like the main dish.” She also added that lunch in the Stratton Student Center has been “good” recently, but brunch “has been of questionable quality.”

Many students were unhappy about being served chicken for five consecutive days during Q-week, Shi wrote. Thomas Adebiyi ’21 echoed this point, writing in an email to *The Tech* that he was served “nearly a week” of “chicken variants for dinner”

Adebiyi wrote that food quality has been inconsistent, with “a

few good days and a few really bad days,” adding that breakfast options have been limited.

Adebiyi added that he is lactose intolerant and “it’s annoying when they throw cream or cheese on top of an otherwise enticing entree.”

Omkar Ghenand ’23 wrote in an email to *The Tech* that the vegetarian options were initially very limited, but that the variety of options had improved over time, and Dining now often has an “extra vegetarian dish.” However, “improvements are still needed.”

Ghenand expressed frustration at meat being added to dishes that would otherwise be vegetarian, such as pasta, writing that “it’s not that hard to just make another container of pasta without the meat.” On one occasion, “vegetarian pasta” was placed in the same container as chicken parmesan.

Ghenand also wrote that the quality of food has been “quite poor,” with many meals undercooked or overcooked. As a result, he has spent “upwards of \$40 a week” on food outside MIT “to substitute for the poor dining hall food.”

A subgroup of the MIT Undergraduate Association (UA) Committee on COVID-19 has been collaborating with DormCon to im-

prove the dining situation. UA Vice President Yu Jing Chen ’22 said in an interview with *The Tech* that the committee has been responsible for collecting student feedback through surveys and communicating with MIT Dining. The committee and DormCon have also jointly pushed for meals to be closer to students, as it has been a long walk for students in Next House, New House, and East Campus to take to the Student Center for meals.

MIT Dining Director Mark Hayes wrote in an email to *The Tech* that MIT Dining has received feedback via house surveys, house teams, and a UA student forum. MIT Dining “got the message that we have to recommit to delivering the quality and variety of food that students deserve.” Beyond “ensuring food quality and variety, the plan is based on open and ongoing communication between students, house teams, MIT Dining, and Bon Appetit,” Hayes wrote.

In response to the negative feedback from students, Hayes and Bon Appetit Resident District Manager Scott Myers sent students living on campus an email Sept. 24 announcing enhancements to the dining program and apologizing for shortcomings in dining quality. “The

process of preparing, transporting, and distributing meals to all nine houses ended up compromising food quality.”

Dining changes include a return to “in-house production” of food in all five dining houses for dinner and weekend brunch, relocation of breakfast and lunch production to the Student Center’s retail kitchen, improved “quality of hot food served in Lobdell for breakfast and lunch,” and “daily food audits” by Bon Appetit’s directors “frequently in tandem with MIT Dining directors.” Several staff members who previously worked in the dining hall kitchens will return to their dining halls.

Hayes and Myers also wrote that they plan to “improve the quality of offerings for students with dietary restrictions.” In addition, they announced the launching of special-themed meals every Friday as well as TechSnacks, an after-hours snack service in all nine undergraduate residence halls.

Shi, Ghenand, and Adebiyi agreed that the terms of the action plan are a step in the right direction. Adebiyi added that while his experience with MIT Dining has been “generally unfavorable” this semester, he was “optimis-

tic for change.” He added that the planned changes are “promising for quality improvements, especially in Next, which is a large portion of the concerns.”

Ghenand and Adebiyi also wrote that the return of chefs who previously worked in dorm dining halls will be an improvement.

The MIT Student Sustainability Coalition recently launched a pilot program aimed at providing students with reusable utensil sets in order to cut down on the usage of single-use utensils that MIT Dining has switched to during the pandemic.

Nishat and Syar wrote that a “good portion” of the containers food is served in “is recyclable if cleaned,” and that they “urge students to recycle and compost” when possible.

Students with additional feedback should email foodstuff@mit.edu, leave a comment on the Bon Appetit website, or “complete a comment card in one of our dining facilities,” Hayes wrote in his statement to *The Tech*. “Additionally, we have created an online idea bank for students who wish to share ideas on how to enhance the campus dining experience with the dining team.”

Lab paused operations, then underwent a deep cleaning

McGovern, from Page 1

infectious DNA or RNA molecules that match the SARS-CoV genome from the actual virus. The two individuals who initially tested positive have since tested negative “using viral assays that target COVID-19 RNA different from those being used in the lab,” they wrote.

Zuber, Desimone, Tsai, and DiCarlo wrote that “there are no known viral particles in the lab and no person-to-person transmission of the virus in the lab.”

The lab paused operations “immediately” after receiving the test results and “underwent a deep cleaning to remove the DNA and RNA that might have been on machinery in the lab.” Additionally, “lab leaders are developing updated policies for decontamination procedures,” they wrote.

MIT is “working closely with public health authorities,” “supporting the researchers involved,” and “exploring new testing strategies for individuals engaged in COVID-related research so that we can reduce the potential for envi-

ronmental positives in the future,” they wrote.

Zuber wrote in an email to *The Tech* that going forward, researchers will be tested before they enter the lab for the day rather than after work. “If that is effective, then it will eliminate the need for a separate testing program; otherwise, there are other tests that do not use the DNA/RNA segments being studied in the lab.”

Zuber wrote that of the additional COVID-19 tests run on the individuals who tested positive, “one test assays the region being used in diagnostic development in the lab along with a different region not used in the research lab. For the result to be positive, both would need to be detected. The other assay targets two different viral genome regions that do not match the material used in the research lab. Both test results were negative.”

Zuber wrote that MIT is “increasingly confident” that the positives are environmental. However, MIT is continuing to “treat each of these results as a ‘true positive’ in terms of our reporting on our dashboard and to public health agencies.”

Diversity Council fall term focus to advise creation of the DEI Strategic Action Plan

Diversity Council, from Page 1

UA John Dozier and Associate Provost Tim Jamison wrote in an email to the MIT community Sept. 24 that the plan will “organize, prioritize, build broad support for, and coordinate Institute-wide action on a unified set of specific DEI objectives” and “create mechanisms to ensure sustained focus, discipline, and accountability for results.”

Green wrote that the Council’s “primary focus” this fall is to advise the creation of the DEI Strategic Action Plan. The UA hopes to communicate student feedback to the steering committee working on the plan and serve as “a cohesive voice” to the committee “on matters concerning undergraduates.”

The Council will also be working with the Institute Community and Equity Office. This past summer, the Council reached out to Dozier as well as former Institute Community and Equity Officers Alyce Johnson and Edmund Bertschinger, for feedback on its

charter. Green, Ishana Shastri ’23, Zaina Moussa ’21, David Spicer ’23, and Naylah Canty ’23 contributed to developing the charter.

Green wrote that other UA committees working on DEI-related efforts can “get support and feedback from the Council.” Student groups may connect with the UA Diversity Council via its onboarding form. The Council anticipates operating in “full-capacity albeit virtually” while students remain off-campus.

This spring, Geathers and UA Vice President Yu Jing Chen ’22 ran on a platform promoting “unity, equity and authenticity.” Their platform defined “equity” as “an active effort in inclusion” and emphasized the importance of “bring[ing] forth voices that have been systematically suppressed.” The platform pledged to create a Diversity Council, adopt the Indigenous Peoples’ Day name change, and create “identity-based community spaces” for minority groups and first-generation and/or low-income students.

Reif announced in an email to the MIT community Sept. 25 that beginning this year, MIT will change the name of the October holiday from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day “in recognition and celebration of the Native presence and voices in our community.” The change was recommended by Dozier and Vice President for Human Resources Ramona Allen as well as endorsed by the Academic Council. Reif also recognized the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the Native American Students Association for “promoting equity and visibility on behalf of our Indigenous community.”

MIT has “identified options” for a campus space “for members of our Indigenous community to gather and share traditions and experiences,” Reif wrote. The space will be designated once “in-person indoor gatherings on campus are again permitted.” Additionally, history professor Craig Wilder will lead a class on researching MIT’s Native American history in the spring.

Voter

Solution, page 8

	2			5	3	9		
			9			6		
	3	1			6			7
2						1	9	
4		5				3		6
	6	9						4
1			4			5	7	
		2			5			
		8	7	1			6	

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Registration

Solution, page 8

30x			2-		3
120x		11+		3+	
	6x			150x	
1-			120x		
		6		8+	
120x				6	

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

Flavors of the Day by Brad Wilber

Solution, page 8

ACROSS

- 1 Mama’s husband
5 Interest group for seniors
9 Lessened, as the tide
14 Teheran’s country
15 Lasting mark
16 Velvety shoe leather
17 Green, nutty ice-cream flavor
19 Deer males
20 Superlative suffix
21 Has no obligation to, for short
23 Difficult journey
24 Minister’s assistant
26 Veep under Clinton
28 In first place
31 Mystical glows
34 In addition
37 “Dear ___ or Madam . . .”
38 Sheriff’s aide
40 Reaches its highest point
42 Piece of firewood
44 Block the path of
45 Was jealous of
47 Furious

- 49 Police officers
50 Brief summons from a boss
51 Drama with sopranos
53 Face of a watch
55 “Picket” property barriers
59 Ring atop an angel
62 Pretty good
65 Firm knock
66 For all to hear
68 Brown ice-cream flavor
70 Dance that “takes two”
71 Leafy salad green
72 Bread-baking appliance
73 Two-thirds of a dozen
74 Takes a chair
75 Campsite shelter

DOWN

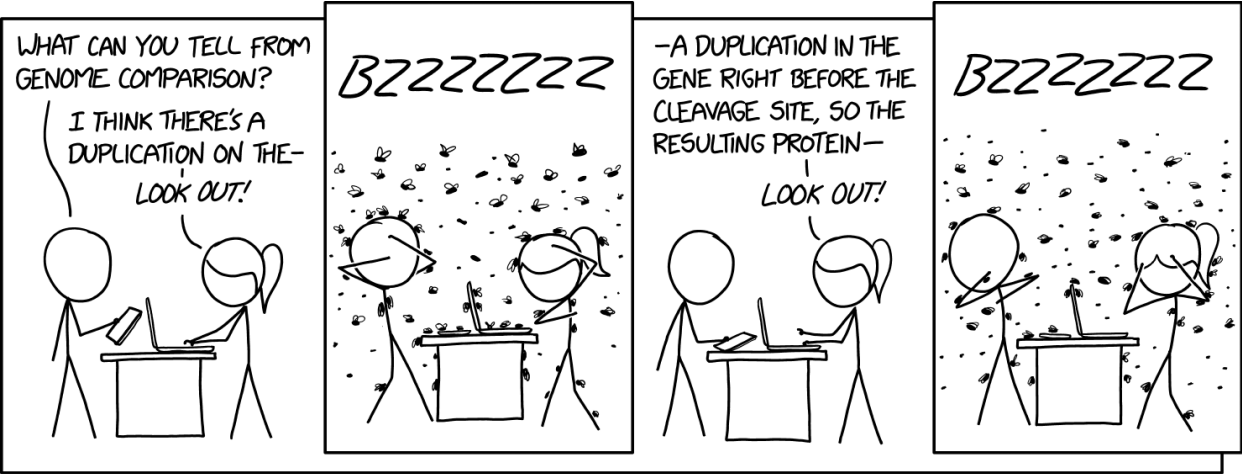
- 1 ___ down (stopped talking)
2 Stand up
3 Spaghetti or fettuccine
4 Picnic intruder
5 Upward climbs
6 Post-workout soreness
7 Sudden police action

- 8 Point of a fork
9 Letter before tee
10 Rich ice-cream flavor with Southern nuts
11 “Grizzly” beast
12 Outer boundary
13 Cubicle furniture
18 Author uncertain: Abbr.
22 Frog cousin
25 Ice-cream flavor with flour and chips
27 Regretted
29 Liquid to fry in
30 Program preview, for short
32 Coupe or sedan
33 Rung of a ladder
34 Chimpanzee, for one
35 Camera glass
36 Rescue
39 12-mo. periods
41 “Half” prefix for final
43 Space between teeth
46 College executive
48 Vandalizes with scratches
52 Make over, as a kitchen

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20				21					22		23			
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59	60	61			62		63	64				65		
66				67		68					69			
70						71					72			
73						74					75			

- 54 Shuts with a key
56 Have an urge for
57 Already dined
58 Used up, as cash
59 Detest
60 Jai ___ (fast-moving sport)
61 “___ time, no see”
63 Spicy Southeast Asian cuisine
64 Streak of lightning
67 Mark that tops an “i”
69 Place with parking spots

[2236] Cicadas



OUR GENETICS WORK HAS PRODUCED 17-SECOND CICADAS, BUT WE'RE HAVING A HARD TIME FIGURING OUT HOW.

After a while you adjust to the new cicadian rhythm.

pilot underway

On Sept. 24, 2020, an article was published in the opinion section of *The Tech* titled “Regaining a culture of sustainability amid a pandemic,” written by Jen Fox, detailing steps MIT Dining could take to reduce the waste produced during COVID operations. To many readers living on campus, where plastic and single-use items seem inescapable, this article hit home. For many of us off campus, this article brought to our attention the feasibility of reusables and the seeming absence of them on MIT’s campus.

The existence and wastefulness of single-use plastics, especially from food delivery practices, is something that student waste groups have been thinking about for a long time. These groups, including the Undergraduate Association's Committee on Sustainability (UA Sustainability) and Waste Watchers, agree with the Sept. 24 article about the importance of action to reduce the use of disposable plastics on campus. As students who have devoted time and effort into addressing this exact problem, we believe that the article misses a few key points: (1) MIT Dining encourages plastic waste reduction efforts and is actively collaborating on a reusable utensil pilot program that is underway as of Sept. 26, 2020; (2) students have been working with administrators to mitigate plastic waste for years; (3) there are many other ways to increase the sustainability of your practices even off campus.

**We cannot simply
regain a culture of
sustainability, as we
at MIT still need to
robustly develop one.**

The reusable utensil pilot will run this fall and will provide all students living on campus with the opportunity to receive a free set of reusable utensils for use throughout the remainder of this semester. This pilot is a joint effort from UA Sustainability, Waste Watchers, the MIT COVID Committee, MIT Dining, and the MIT Office of Recycling and Materials Management. At the end of the semester, the students who have participated will provide information about their experience with the utensils,

including how often they used the set, any challenges they faced with having a set, and whether or not they would continue to use reusable utensils in the future.

This information will serve to inform procurement decisions in the spring for the Division of Student Life (DSL) and MIT Dining. If the pilot is successful and the students who participate are enthusiastic about continuing with reusable utensils in the future, the value of reusables will be clear to key decision makers, and a model for effective changemaking in sustainability at MIT will be laid out for anyone in the student body to build from.

As students, we all play a part in the MIT waste ecosystem, and by extension, MIT's sustainability as an institution.

If you are currently on campus and were energized by the Sept. 24 article, sign up for the pilot to prove that it can and will work on a larger scale. You can sign up to participate in the pilot via a link sent to your email. For distribution to happen in a timely manner, you must sign up by Oct. 5. We cannot simply regain a culture of sustainability, as we at MIT still need to robustly develop one. Participation in this pilot is a direct way that you can contribute.

With the development of a culture of sustainability in mind, the Student Sustainability Coalition (SSC) was born this summer out of an effort to diminish the waste produced on campus from the COVID school year, especially from the meal plan. Initially, members from UA Sustainability, Waste Watchers, UA COVID Committee, and Dormitory Council planned to collaborate on the project together, but at the recommendation of the MIT Office of Sustainability, formed a collective organization to best represent the voices of all students doing work in the environment, sustainability, and climate policy space on campus. SSC provides a united front in communications with administrators and a platform for collaboration. As SSC was formed, work on the Fall Dining Waste project continued as a student-group effort until we presented to the DSL. Since then, we have been working closely with administrators to roll out the Reusable Utensil Pilot and a poster/education campaign.

This semester, the SSC is expanding its membership to include MIT Divest, the Sustainable Energy Alliance, the Energy Club, PlanEAT, the Water Club, and the Undergraduate Energy Club. In addition to expanding its membership, the SSC has added a project group working to provide student input on MIT's new Climate Action Plan. We are still growing as an organization, so if you are a sustainability group on campus or would like to propose a project, email sustainability-coalition@mit.edu.

If you are not able to participate in the pilot or want to further increase your lifestyle sustainability, the following is a list of things you may start off considering:

- request no utensils on Uber Eats or other takeout apps
- shift your room arrangement so that your desk can get natural light (to avoid having lights on all the time)
- use grocery bags and shipping boxes as storage containers or to collect trash (i.e. out of season shoes, etc.)
- educate yourself on waste collection policies with a 10-minute Atlas course on MIT waste disposal (i.e. no plastic film in recycling, wash plastic containers, etc.)
- consolidate orders on Amazon by ordering multiple items at once to reduce packaging

In addition to personal sustainability, if you live off campus and would like to continue advocating for changes on campus, you can reach out to any sustainability-related club individually or to SSC to voice your concerns and get involved. We are constantly working with admin and various MIT sustainability offices, and we can provide you with a channel to have your voice heard and a platform to support your initiatives.

As students, we all play a part in the MIT waste ecosystem, and by extension, MIT's sustainability as an institution. It is key that we be aware of our roles, and that we understand ways we can change our habits or get involved if sustainability is something important to us. SSC hopes this article provides clarity on exactly what sustainability student groups are undertaking now and how you can play a role in advancing MIT sustainability.

The authors of this article are members of the Student Sustainability Coalition:

Kelly Wu '22 is co-chair of the UA Committee on Sustainability.

Megan Xu '22 is co-chair of the UA Committee on Sustainability.

Natalie Northrup '22 is a member of Waste Watchers Admin.

OPINION POLICY

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Spring classes that ‘can be taught effectively online’ are to remain virtual, Waitz writes in an email to undergraduates

Spring residential life policies to ‘remain restrictive’ to ‘prioritize protecting individual and community health’

By **Mauricio Barba Da Costa and Wenbo Wu**

MIT classes that “can be taught effectively online” will likely remain online for the spring term, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz wrote in an email to undergraduates Sept. 25.

Waitz added that “many of the classroom usage and scheduling processes as well as the residential life policies” from the fall will carry over into the spring. “Residential life policies will continue to priori-

tize protecting individual and community health and, as such, will remain restrictive.”

However, there will be “some small-group, in-person learning experiences, notably for classes that require access to labs, workshops, and performance space,” Waitz wrote.

President L. Rafael Reif wrote in a letter to the MIT community July 7 that the “current hope is to offer every first-year, sophomore, and junior the opportunity to be on campus for the Spring semester.”

He added that with new housing becoming available “by the start of the Spring term,” MIT anticipates to have more beds available.”

Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD ’88 and Waitz wrote in an email to *The Tech* that Reif’s letter remains “the framework guiding our planning work,” and that they “are just beginning to assess the feasibility of inviting three undergraduate classes to campus this Spring.”

Barnhart and Waitz wrote that although “given the facts we know

at this time, seniors would not be on campus next spring,” they would also be granted “the opportunity to be on campus for the Spring term” if a vaccine or other effective treatments are developed.

Waitz’s email to undergraduates also contained a survey asking students whether they plan to enroll as an MIT student in the spring semester, where they plan to stay, and who they will live with during the spring.

Waitz and Barnhart wrote that they plan to “engage students, staff

and faculty in an accelerated assessment effort... to make a determination” for the spring “as soon as we can” and cited the survey as “a first step in our engagement and feedback collection work.”

Waitz and Barnhart wrote that they will continue collaborating with the Undergraduate Association, who “have been excellent partners throughout” the fall and spring planning processes and are “in the early stages of collaborating with a cross-section of students, faculty, and staff.”

MISTI launches new initiatives for 2020-2021 academic year

Students applying to MISTI Summer 2021 can expect application cycle to look ‘very similar’ to typical year

By **Srinidhi Narayanan**

MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI) has launched several new initiatives, including a domestic internship program, remote experiential learning opportunities, a first-year learning community, and a new podcast, for the 2020–2021 academic year. If public health conditions do not permit travel Summer 2021, MISTI plans to continue offering remote internships and research opportunities.

“MISTI staff was hard at work this summer, testing out new programs and formats in the post-COVID reality,” MISTI Communications Manager Anna-Rose Stember wrote in an email to *The Tech*. Stem-

ber wrote that MISTI’s “numerous global hackathons have brought together hundreds of student participants worldwide to solve critical problems surrounding the coronavirus and other global issues.” Individual programs have been running a series of webinars examining COVID-19 related issues from a global perspective.

MISTI piloted a domestic internship program Summer 2020, placing several students in remote internships with companies located in non-coastal areas of the U.S. such as the South and Midwest. Stember wrote that MISTI is “currently planning to continue the pilot in Summer 2021.”

MISTI is participating in the Experiential Learning Opportunity

guarantee, providing undergraduates a chance to earn a stipend of up to \$1,900. Stember wrote that MISTI “organized around 250 remote opportunities for students” and plans to “match students with placements for fall and IAP.” This initiative will continue in the spring.

MISTI has also launched a bi-weekly “MISTI Radio” podcast “for students, staff, and faculty to reflect on their experiences abroad and how they relate to identity, culture, and broader global challenges,” Stember wrote.

MISTI collaborated with MIT Global Languages to launch Tutmonda, a first-year learning community focused on international experiences and learning new languages and cultures.

Additional MISTI initiatives include a partnership with the Language Conversation Exchange “to share cultural presentations and practice language skills with the MIT community” and a series of career-focused panel discussions.

MISTI programs remain open to international students, but placing them within their home countries will be “limited” in accordance with MIT’s pandemic response. International students who contact their local program managers can expect an experience “similar” to those participating in a regular MISTI program, Stember wrote. The program manager “will review their resume and transcript,” meet with the student to discuss their interests and goals, and work to create a placement for

the student in a company or lab in their home country, comparable to a traditional MISTI experience.

Students applying to MISTI for Summer 2021 can expect the application cycle to look “very similar to a typical year,” Stember wrote. Programs will accept applications throughout fall and early winter and meet with students to find a placement.

While “in-person placements will depend on whether travel to and from the host country is possible next summer,” Stember wrote that MISTI will “convert these experiences to remote opportunities” wherever possible so that “students can still gain valuable skills while receiving the cross-cultural integration that makes MISTI programs so unique.”

It's Dangerous to Go Alone!



Take This.

photo@tech.mit.edu

Siebel Scholars Class of 2021

The Siebel Scholars program was founded in 2000 to recognize the most talented graduate students in business, computer science, bioengineering, and energy science. Each year, over 90 outstanding graduate students are selected as Siebel Scholars based on academic excellence and leadership and join an active, lifelong community among an ever-growing group of leaders. We are pleased to recognize this year’s Siebel Scholars.

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WHITING SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING**

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Bria Macklin
Yuan Rui
Alexandra Sneider
Sarah Marie Somers

**MIT
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING**

Ishwar Kohale
Noor Momin
Molly Parsons
Caroline Werlang
Ian Andrews

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING**

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Shreya Deshmukh
Hannah Kempton
Margarita Khariton
Namrata Anand

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING**

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Alison N. Su
Marc Adrian Lim
Anjali Gopal
Zoë R. Steier

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
SAN DIEGO
JACOBS SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING**

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Gabrielle M. Colvert
Dhruva S. Katrekar
Gregory D. Poore
Juliane R. Sempionatto Moreto

BUSINESS

**MIT
SLOAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**

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George Eliades
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Olga Timirgalieva
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Dylan Sun

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Kalimuthu Selvam

ME VS. ME

Whistleblowing and accountability

The curious case of Alexandra de Beaumont

By Joanna Lin
EDITOR

Last Monday, a few Facebook posts were sharing a link to a GoFundMe for Alexandra de Beaumont, a fellow '22 MIT student fighting natural killer cell leukemia. I didn't know this person, but I had every intention of donating, once I crossed a few items off my to-do list. Then I got a message from my roommate: Did I think the GoFundMe was a little fishy?

I thought it was a pretty simple problem, although I was a little disconcerted that I was friends with this unknown person on Facebook, with 156 mutual friends. I messaged a few of the people who had shared the link, to respectfully ask if they personally knew Alexandra. None of them did, but the donations list was littered with names of my friends and classmates.

What kind of ignorant gossip girl would I look like if I sounded the alarm that one of my own classmates was lying about their identity?

The more I looked at it, the more confusing the GoFundMe description became. The NK cell leukemia diagnosis came six months ago, but Alexandra went on a leave of absence in January. The goal was £56,700, where the description only asked for a few thousand pounds. Alexandra de Beaumont was neither in the people directory nor the alumni directory.

We had very slim evidence, and I also knew that my social circles were not wide enough to conclude that this person didn't

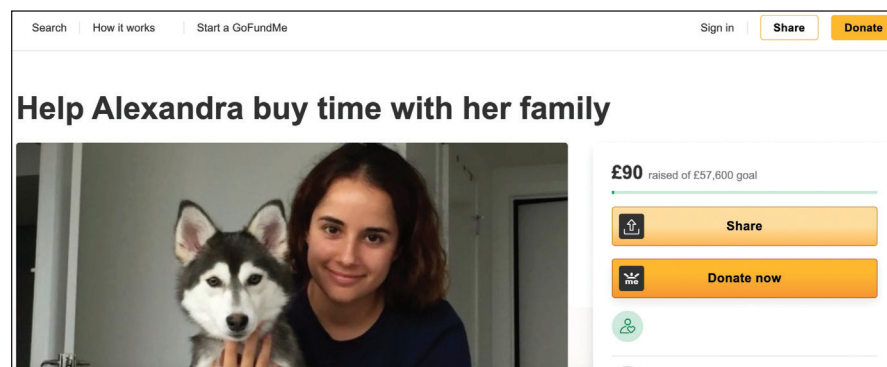
exist. What kind of ignorant gossip girl would I look like if I sounded the alarm that one of my own classmates was lying about their identity?

I felt like the two of us were getting nowhere, so I emailed faraz@mit.edu. For the uninitiated, it's a mailing list Faraz Masrour '21 created his freshman year to send memes (highly recommend). It was the only corner of MIT I could think of where I could ask the question, "Does ANYONE know who Alexandra de Beaumont is?" and be taken seriously. There are 350 people on that list, and although I probably don't know half of them, I trusted them to answer me in good faith.

Emails flooded into my inbox for the next 36 hours. It was like watching the most extraordinary parts of MIT work together. We had Course 6 magicians who accessed cached versions of Alexandra's personal website and showed that posts from "2018" were posted in 2020. We had incredibly meticulous people who watched three years of graduation videos from the high school in Alexandra's Facebook profile. We had courageous ones who just messaged Alexandra to test knowledge of all our MIT quirks. We had some first years who said they knew an Alexandra de Beaumont who had tried to pass as a 2024 before.

And perhaps most importantly, we had skeptics who reminded us that these discrepancies — no matter how suspicious — didn't prove that Alexandra wasn't an MIT student.

When I woke up in the morning, there sat an email from our dear overlord, Petey. He applauded our investigative work and suggested we ask the Registrar for any student's academic record. My roommate emailed the Registrar, and the official results were in: Alexandra de Beaumont never had an academic record at MIT. There was no question that the MIT claim was a scam. Now the question was, "how are we going to alert MIT students?"



JOANNA LIN — THE TECH

The GoFundMe fundraiser for Alexandra de Beaumont contained many inconsistencies.

There were multiple worst-case scenarios at play. What if this was a crime ring organized by people who could physically harm me? What if this person was lying about being associated with MIT, but not about the cancer part? There were also less worse scenarios. What if this was a social experiment from the Media Lab? What if Harvard was pranking us?

We had skeptics who reminded us that these discrepancies — no matter how suspicious — didn't prove that Alexandra wasn't an MIT student.

Since it had all started on Facebook, my roommate made a public Facebook post. That garnered some dubious comments from unknown accounts, so they took it down. The loudest we could be while staying within the MIT community, then, was dormspam. I wrote up some key points of

what was uncovered the night before and made it clear that we did not take issue with the claim to NK cell leukemia, only the claim to MIT.

Surprisingly, whoever was behind this kept going. At least three burner accounts appeared, claiming to know Alexandra de Beaumont, who were themselves unverified. A finsta account for an actual MIT student, who confirmed that they did not have a finsta, appeared and then disappeared. With so many eyes on the GoFundMe, we noticed every change. Every time someone got a refund and the total went down. Every time an update was added or changed, to claim membership with the Teenage Cancer Trust of England, then the (nonexistent) Teenage Cancer Group of Berkshire. Currently, the fundraiser is closed.

There's no lesson at the end of this article. I don't even know how I feel about the whole thing. I'm upset that someone took advantage of the goodness of MIT students, I'm proud of us for trying to protect our community, and I'm worried that this will make every one of us a little less likely to donate the next time we come across someone in need. That's the cruelest part of Alexandra de Beaumont: the shattered trust.

Be a PENguin

write for us
e-mail join@tech.mit.edu



Solution to Voter

from page 3

6	2	7	1	5	3	9	4	8
5	8	4	9	7	2	6	3	1
9	3	1	8	4	6	2	5	7
2	7	3	6	8	4	1	9	5
4	1	5	2	9	7	3	8	6
8	6	9	5	3	1	7	2	4
1	9	6	4	2	8	5	7	3
7	4	2	3	6	5	8	1	9
3	5	8	7	1	9	4	6	2

Solution to Registration

1	6	5	4	2	3
6	5	4	3	1	2
4	3	2	1	5	6
3	2	1	6	4	5
2	1	6	5	3	4
5	4	3	2	6	1

Solution to Flavors

P	A	P	A	A	A	R	P	E	B	B	E	D
I	R	A	N	S	C	A	R	S	S	U	E	D
P	I	S	T	A	C	H	I	O	S	T	A	G
E	S	T	N	E	E	D	E	D	T	R	E	K
D	E	A	C	O	N	G	O	R	E			
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P	E	A	K	S	L	O	G	D	E	T	E	F
E	N	V	I	E	D	M	A	D	C	O	P	S
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		D	I	A	L			F	E	N	C	E
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T	A	N	G	O		S	A	L	E		O	V
E	I	G	H	T		S	I	T	S		T	E

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